
FARTHER REASONS

OF A

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN,

&c. &c.



103. K. 12
2

FARTHER REASONS

OF A

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

FOR OPPOSING

Mr. WILBERFORCE's MOTION

ON THE 15TH DAY OF MAY LAST,

FOR PROHIBITING

BRITISH SUBJECTS TRADING TO AFRICA

TO PROCURE

NEGROES FOR THE BRITISH COLONIES.

LONDON:

Printed for. J. DEBRETT, opposite BURLINGTON
HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

—
1792.

RECEIVED

COUNTY OF

NEW YORK

IN SENATE



FARTHER REASONS,

&c. &c.

THE hope I had entertained that the great and respectable majority in the House of Commons on the 15th of May, 1791, which decided against Mr. Wilberforce's motion for prohibiting the importation of African negroes into the British Colonies, would have deterred that gentleman and his associates from again calling for the opinion of the same Parliament at least, upon that subject, was soon dissipated, when, upon my return to the country, I was informed that emissaries from the Old Jewry Society were travelling through the island, dispersing fictitious and garbled states of the evidence given before the Committee upon the slave trade, and soliciting the ignorant

and illiterate inhabitants of every little village to sign petitions for the abolition of what many of them had never before heard existed, and who might as easily have been induced to believe the Creoles were kidnapped and carried away to Africa, as that the Africans were kidnapped and carried away to the West Indies. The plan of the philanthropists has, indeed, been this year somewhat amended, and freed from some of the absurdities to which I had shewn that of the last session was obnoxious; but, as by changing their mode, they proved their ignorance of the subject when they first undertook the business, which was of itself a good reason for withholding confidence from their representations; so, from their not being able to judge of the effects of the measure they now proposed, they run into as great absurdities in its prosecution, as they had been involved in by that which they had deserted; for, knowing little of Africa, and of its trade, and still less of the West India Colonies, and nothing at all of the general, commercial, and colonial system of the empire, they ignorantly imagined, that by avoiding what they had been shewn

was

was wrong on one side, they would find themselves in the right on the other. I had pointed out the absurdity, as well as hazard, in the attempt to prohibit the importation of negroes into the Colonies, while they left it free to British subjects to purchase them in Africa: They therefore made the prohibiting British subjects purchasing negroes in Africa, their object in the present session. Whether the British subjects or the African negroes were to enjoy the greatest share of the philanthropy of this measure, was not explained by the great orators in the debate upon it; for as it was not pretended that other nations had signified their intention to prohibit the trade to their subjects when we did so to ours, there was no good reason to suppose fewer Africans would be purchased and transported than hitherto; as it is not likely that the general concurrence of other nations would be more easily obtained *after* we had put them in possession of the *whole trade*, than while we continued to have so great a share of it in our own hands. But even should a general concurrence immediately take place, as no means have yet

B 2

been

been employed, much less any progress made, in civilizing or instructing the people of Africa, or to point out to those who now rear slaves for sale, another method of turning them to proffit : It was, far from being clear to me that the consequences of such a general concurrence would be beneficial to those poor creatures who are the property of the African Princes or great men, and still less so to the unfortunate debtors, prisoners of war, and *convicts*.

To suppose *convicts* objects of their humanity, would not, I know, be relished by some of the philanthropists, and particularly by the great orator and consistent patriot who treated with so much ridicule the benevolence of the Planters in ridding Africa of convicts to establish them in our Islands. But that great orator might have recollected that some of the offences for which the Africans forfeit their liberty, are not crimes of such moral turpitude as to render the *convicts* unfit to live in civil society, and I doubt not but he himself is acquainted with some *convicts* of adultery, or unsuccessful gaming in this country, who he thinks so well of notwithstanding,

ing, as to believe they might safely be trusted with a hoe on a sugar plantation; and even the African *convicts* of dealing with the devil, and bewitching their countrymen, might be found as innoxious in a West-India gang, as certain *black legs* are found to be at Newmarket; or some *knowing ones* at the Faro and E O tables in Westminster.

The *consciences* of the British subjects were also to be benefited by this philanthropic prohibition of the trade to Africa; but as the *man* consists of a body as well as a mind, and many more bodies might suffer from the want of the employment that trade procures them, than consciences would be benefited, the philanthropy of the measure might, upon the whole, be doubtful, even among moralists; and among politicians, as well as among rakes, he who looks to the enjoyments of the body, will be deemed wiser than he who attends only to the mind; for I have never read or heard of any people who would not rather be fed than taught. Indeed it is but fair to Mr. Wilberforce to observe, that he seemed sensible that neither philanthropy
or

or policy would bear him out in a total abolition of the trade; for he expressly declared it was not humanity or policy, but *justice*, that he contended for. His *justice*, however, appeared to me to be as defective as his philanthropy, in not embracing the whole of the object; for no mention did he make of compensation to the West-India Proprietors who had purchased the lands and expended their labour and fortunes in cultivating them, on the faith and encouragement of more than 20 acts of Parliament, assuring them of a constant supply of African labourers, without which they never would or could have settled in those islands, and without which they assert they cannot continue to enjoy the fruits of their expence and industry. Nor did I think that *their* having so considerably augmented the trade, revenue, and navigation, of Great Britain since the peace, was a *sufficient cause* for Administration to *punish* them so severely, as not only to restrain them from extending the cultivation of their lands, but to prevent them from continuing to cultivate what they had already improved.

Mr. Pitt it, is true, kindly undertook to prove to them that he understood their interests much better than themselves, and that the abolition of the African trade would be highly for their advantage; but I thought him rather unfortunate in his choice of the mode of reasoning he adopted for the purpose, as it appeared to militate in direct contradiction to his own favourite finance plan. He admitted that the negroes in Jamaica decreased nearly one per cent; but he argued, notwithstanding, that the capital would continue undiminished for ages. In his finance plan, however, he assured us that an annual saving of one per cent would in 44 years totally annihilate the capital. But how the one effect should follow in Jamaica and the other in England from the same cause, was utterly beyond my comprehension. However, as I had mathematical demonstration for the one, and only the Minister's own speculation for the other, I was at no loss to which I ought to give the greatest credit.

Mr. Fox, indeed, made short work of the whole, by expressing his wish to get rid of the Colonies, as well as the African trade altogether. But I confess the *advan-*
tage

stage to Great Britain of such a *riddance* did not appear to me so *very certain*, as to induce me to vote for any measure that had the tendency either to destroy or distress the colonies, or dispose them to embrace any favourable occasion of separating themselves from us. The experience of nine years, though fully sufficient, it seems, to satisfy a great and superior genius, and deep-thinking statesman, that the separation of the North American provinces was no evil to this country, was too short a period, and the embarrassments attending their new establishment too great for my weak understanding to found reasonings upon, or to draw references from of what might be the case a century hence respecting them; much less was I able to make their present disposition to trade with us a ground for believing that they would never form other connections, or that the West-India islands, if forced into a separation from this country by so flagrant a breach of national faith, and wanton attack upon their properties, as that which is now meditated, would always continue to be our customers,

Nor

Nor were these the only circumstances in the conduct of those brilliant luminaries upon this occasion, which I was unable to comprehend; for what little I had known of great men, led me to imagine that the support of the authority of Parliament, and the preservation of the confidence of the people in their representatives, so essential to the public welfare and happiness, were objects of the unceasing attention of all able statesmen, and particularly of the King's confidential servants; and more especially at a time when the authority of all Government was endeavoured to be overturned by setting up the *natural rights of men*, and their unalienable title to *personal* representation against all civil compacts or positive institutions, however sanctioned by time, or proved salutary by experience. But when I saw the people excited to express their disapprobation of a resolution of the House of Commons, and petitions solicited, not complaining of a grievance, but dictating a measure, and those petitions triumphantly declared to express the sense of the people in contradiction to the vote of their representatives,

I confess I was so bewildered in my ideas of persons and things, that I began to suspect I was got into one of the reforming societies, and had been listening to Horne Tooke and Tom Payne, contending for the *glorious* distinction of being the leader in overturning the Constitution; though when my recollection returned, and I found myself to be a Member of Parliament, solemnly appointed to watch over the public good, which I conceived to be inseparably connected with the preservation of our excellent Constitution, I felt an additional motive to all those by which I had before been actuated for giving my negative to the proposition, *in the petitions themselves*, and in the conduct of those who promoted and abetted them. It was indeed whispered to me by a friend of the Minister's, that as the measure of the abolition would certainly be carried, that it would be prudent to let Mr. Pitt have the popularity of it rather than Mr. Fox, as he was more friendly to the West-India colonies, and would probably shew them more indulgence; which brought to my mind an incident that happened when I was a school-boy;

boy ; and as it may entertain my readers, and is a case exactly in point, I will relate it.

A woman of the name of Moll Trotter took upon her the office of executioner to the Ulster circuit in Ireland, and regularly travelled after the Judges to execute the sentences they had pronounced. As Moll was a favourite with the school-boys, they gave her a guard upon her arrival in every county town to protect her from the pelting of the mob ; and I happened to be appointed to that service when Moll's husband was left for execution in the town where I was at school, and I attended her into the jail to receive him. When the husband was brought out of the cell, and he saw Moll coming up with the rope in her hand to halter him, he lifted up his hands and eyes, and exclaimed, " My
 " dear Molly, is it you that is going to do
 " this to me." " Why, Phelim, *honey*," says Moll, " as long as the thing must be
 " done you know, what signifies it to
 " you who it is that does it ; and would
 " not you rather that your own dear wife
 " should get the thirteen and fourpence

“ for hanging you than a stranger.” Phe-
lim acquiesced, and Moll turned him off
with all the delicacy of her sex.

I did not, however, believe the West-
India planters were equally acquiescent, or
that their case was yet so desperate as to
render it necessary to surrender their pro-
perty to be destroyed by one or other of
the two great leaders. For although through
the means which have been used to over-
awe the Members of the House of Com-
mons, the minority of last session has been
raised into a majority in this; the solemn
reception the resolutions met with in the
House of Lords, and the wide and exten-
sive inquiry instituted there under the con-
duct of Lords of such well-informed minds,
and comprehensive capacities, give them
good ground to expect, that not only the
attention due to property from the Supreme
Court of Justice, but the care and tender-
ness of *real statesmen* to the interests of
the subject, will be fully displayed in their
Lordships’ proceedings; and the commerce,
navigation, and revenue, of Great Britain
be rescued from the dangers which threat-
en them, from the wild enthusiasm, the
finister

finister designs, and eagerness for popularity, of the several descriptions of men who have combined for their destruction.

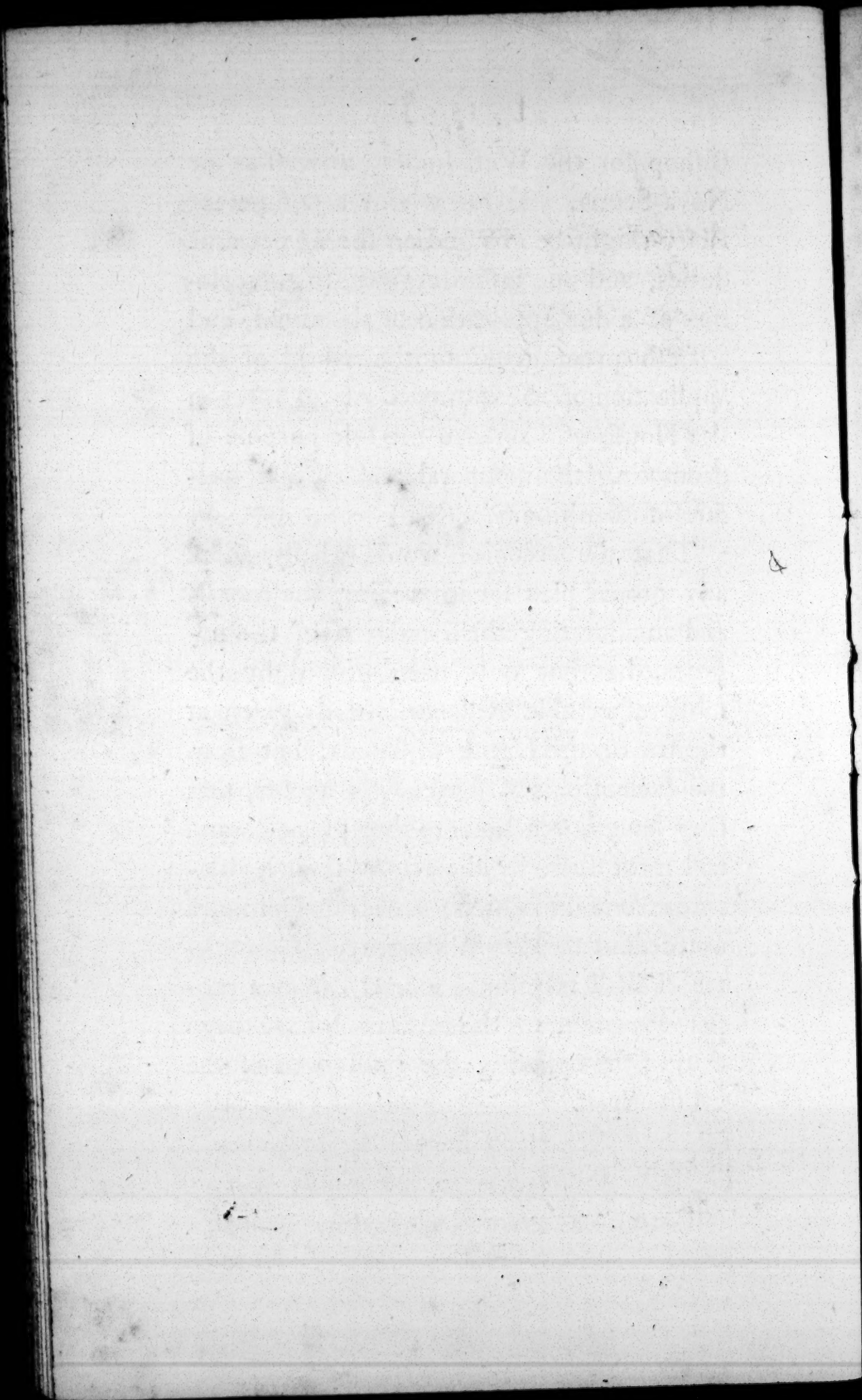
Should the resolutions, however, be concurred in by their Lordships, and a bill be brought into the House of Commons in consequence of that concurrence, all the objections which I have stated in my former publication, to the principle of such a bill will be applicable to it, and many more which I foresee will arise out of its construction: But as the advanced state of the session, and some other causes which may tend to hasten a prorogation, must prevent any such bill from passing this year, I shall not anticipate the ground of my opposition to it next session. But I cannot conclude this paper, without expressing my earnest wish, that in the mean time some plan may be concerted for the religious instruction of the negroes in the colonies suited to their temporal condition. The Bishop of London has been expected to take it upon him as Diocesan of the West Indies; but in justice to that excellent prelate, as well as to the memory of his immediate prede-

predecessors, it is proper to acquaint the public, that the Bishop of London has no ecclesiastical authority in the colonies whatever, nor any episcopal connection with them, more than any other of the Bishops, except the being generally applied to by the candidates who come here for ordination. Formerly, indeed, the Bishops of London had a commission under the Great Seal, giving them ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the colonies, as far as the Crown could do it; and they appointed commissaries to inspect and report the behaviour of the clergy, which was attended with some good consequences; but Bishop Sherlocke (I think it was) considering such a commission as incompetent, refused to accept it, and none has since been given to any Bishop of London, nor have any of them had commissaries in any of the islands; and hence the dissolute behaviour of the clergy there may be accounted for without any imputation on the Bishops of London, unless from their share of the blame which must fall upon the whole bench for not employing their influence with Government to appoint a
Bishop

Bishop for the West Indies, as well as for Nova Scotia, and for whom a competent salary might be charged on the $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent duties, and one instance given to the colonies of a due application of that fund, and a fresh proof given to the world of the application of the influence of 26 votes in the House of Lords to the sole purpose of promoting the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind.

That the colonies would gladly adopt any proper plan for improving the morals and ameliorating the condition of the negroes, has not only been proved by the most respectable evidence already given at the bar of the House of Lords, but from the declarations of some of the agents, that they have instructions to that purpose, and still more fully by the acts of their legislatures; one of which, passed in Dominica antecedent to Mr. Wilberforce's Committee, I shall subjoin an extract of, as a proper appendix to the reasons I have been stating for opposing the resolutions of the 2d of April.

Extract



*Extract of an Act passed in the Island of
Dominica in the Year 1788, for the En-
couragement, Protection, and better Go-
vernment of Slaves.*

WHEREAS the different acts of this island for the government and protection of slaves are expired; and whereas it is highly expedient that a system of laws for the encouragement, protection, and better government of slaves, founded on principles of policy, justice, and humanity, should be enacted. We your Majesty's dutiful, loyal, and obedient subjects, the Governor, Council, and Assembly, of this your Majesty's Island of Dominica, do humbly pray your most excellent Majesty, that it may be enacted and ordained.

And be it, and it is hereby enacted and ordained by the authority of the same, that every owner, renter, manager, or overseer, of any slave or slaves, shall feed, or cause to be fed, all such slave or slaves as shall be under his, her, or their care, with a sufficient quantity of good and whole-

some food, and shall give them good and sufficient cloathing, and shall provide dry and comfortable lodging for them; and in case of the sickness of any of the said slave or slaves, the said owner, renter, manager, or overseer, shall provide for the said slave or slaves proper medical assistance and advice, and the said owner, renter, manager, or overseer, shall provide, within the boundary of his, her, or their plantation, a lot of land for all and every old, infirm, and distempered slave or slaves; and if any owner, renter, manager, or overseer, of any slave or slaves, shall neglect to feed and cloath his, her, or their slave or slaves, or shall neglect, in case of sickness, to provide for the said slave or slaves proper medical assistance and advice, and comfortable lodging, or shall neglect to provide comfortable lodging, wholesome food, and medical assistance for all and every old, infirm, and distempered slave or slaves within the boundary of his, her, or their plantation or lot of land, such owner, renter, manager, or overseer, shall be fined in a sum not exceeding One Hundred pounds, at the discretion of three or more

more magistrates, for a neglect of any of the regulations laid down by this clause, which sum shall be levied by warrant, under their hands and seals, on the goods and chattels of the offender or offenders, and directed to any constable or constables of this island, and paid into the public treasury of this island for the public uses thereof.

And whereas a knowledge of the doctrines, and a due attention to the exercise of the duties of the Christian religion, would tend to improve the morals, and to advance the temporal and eternal happiness of the slaves: Be it, and it is hereby farther enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, that all owners, renters, managers, or overseers, or one of them, shall on every Sunday, on their several estates and plantations, and at the most convenient time of the day, convene together the slaves of the said estate or plantation, for the purpose of performing divine worship; and the said owners, renters, managers, or overseers, shall not fail to exhort all male and female slaves who may be unbaptized, to receive the holy sacrament of

baptism; and all the unbaptized children of slaves shall, after the publication of this act, receive the said sacrament of baptism. And on neglect of the performance of these duties, the said owner, renter, manager, or overseer, shall be fined in any sum not less than ten pounds, nor more than twenty five pounds, to be recovered and appropriated in manner and form as directed by the first clause of this act.

And be it, and it is hereby enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, that all owners, renters, managers, and overseers, of all the slaves who may be arrived at the years of maturity, and who may be desirous of entering into a connubial state, shall encourage and exhort such slave or slaves to receive the ceremony of marriage, as instituted under the forms of the Christian religion; and in neglect of doing so, the said owner, renter, manager, or overseer, shall be subject to a fine of five pounds, to be recovered and appropriated in manner and form as prescribed by the first clause of this act.

And whereas a relaxation from labour on certain days in the year, and an indulgence

gence in innocent recreations and amusements, would tend to improve the health and add to the contentment of the slaves. Be it, and it is hereby farther enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the slaves in this island (house servants, stock keepers, and watchmen man excepted) shall not be required to labour for their masters and ownes on any Sunday throughout the year, on Christmas day, New Year's day, Good Friday, and the fifteenth day of August. And in case any one of the said holidays should fall out on a Sunday, then the Wednesday following is to be allowed such slave or slaves in lieu of such Sunday.

And whereas it is just and proper that the slaves should be protected in their persons from the violence and inhumanity of such white persons, and free persons of colour, who may have no lawful authority over them, or who may exert such authority in an unjustifiable manner.

Be it, and it is hereby farther enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, that any white person or persons, free person or persons of colour, who shall be convicted

victed of maiming, defacing, or mutilating, or cruelly torturing or causing to maim, deface, mutilate, or cruelly torture any slave, shall be imprisoned for a term not exceeding three months, or fined in any sum not exceeding one hundred pounds, current money of this island, and to continue in confinement until the said fine shall be paid, which fine shall be appropriated in manner directed by the first clause of this act.

And be it, and it is hereby farther enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, that if any white person or persons, free person or persons of colour whatever, shall be convicted of the wilful murder of any slave or slaves, or shall be accessory thereto, such white person or persons, or free person or persons of colour, shall suffer death.

And be it, and it is hereby farther enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, that any white person or persons, free person or persons of colour, who shall be guilty of striking or beating severely any slave or slaves the property of another, or of depriving any such slave or slaves of any property in his, her, or their possession,
he,

he, she, or they, on being convicted of such offence or offences before any three or more Justices of the peace, shall be fined in any sum not exceeding thirty pounds, besides making full restitution of any property ; which fine shall be recovered by warrant under the hands and seals of the said three or more Justices of the Peace, directed to the Provost Marshal or his lawful deputy, who is hereby authorized and required to levy the same on the goods and chattels of such offender or offenders ; and in case of not finding any such goods or chattels, then to take such offender or offenders into custody, and confine him, her, or them, in the common jail, until he, she, or they, shall have paid his fine and fees. Provided always that this clause shall not be understood to extend to any person or persons taking goods from a negro on suspicion or knowledge of such goods being stolen, or the depriving the said slave or slaves of any dangerous fire-arms or torch, or improper weapon.

And in order to protect the domestic and connubial happiness of slaves,

Be it, and it is hereby farther enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, that any white person, or free person of colour, whatever, who shall take away, and cohabit with the wife or wives of any slave or slaves in this island, shall, on conviction thereof, before any three or more magistrates, be subject to a fine not exceeding the sum of fifty pounds, to be recovered and appropriated in manner and form as is directed by the first clause of this act.



THE END.

